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1964/07/27

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Action SS Info

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ACTION FLASH SECSTATE 252 CHONE OPTWO, CINCPAC 108, WHITE HOUSE 13, SEC DEF UNN, JULY 27, 10 AM

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Authority STATE letter OCT 11 1978
By ..., NARS, Date JUL 3 0 1979

DEPTEL 253.

ALEX JOHNSON AND I CALLED ON KHANH AT DALAT AT 1500, 27 JULY AND DISCUSSED ALONE WITH HIM A WIDE RANGE OF TOPIC. WE WERE UNCERTAIN IN WHAT MOOD WE WOULD FIND HIM AS WE HAD RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT THE PREVIOUS DAY HE HAD BEEN GRUMBLING ABOUT THE UNCERTAINTIES OF US POLICY AND HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO ADJUST HIMSELF TO A PUPPET ROLE.

ON ARRIVING WE ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS DAY AND A HALF OF CONFERENCES WHICH HE WAS HAVING WITH HIS SENIOR GENERALS. THE QUESTION ELICITED NO IMMEDIATE RESPONSE OTHER THAN THAT NUMEROUS SUBJECTS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. SOME OF THE SUBJECTS CAME OUT IN THE SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION REPORTED ELSEWHERE IN THIS MESSAGE.

I OPENED THE MATTER OF A PRESS RELEASE BY HIM COVERING THE US MILITARY PERSONNEL INCREASE. HE SAW AT ONCE THE ADVANTAGE OF HIS PUTTING OUT SUCH A RELEASE AND ACCEPTED OUR TEXT WITH ONE MODIFICATION. HE PREFERRED TO CHANGE REFERENCETO "ADVISORS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL" TO "ADVISORS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCES" SAYING THAT THE MENTION OF THE DISTRICT SUGGESTED AN UNDESIRABLY DEEP US ADVISOR PENETRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. IT WAS AGREED THAT WE WOULD TAKE THE STATEMENT BACK TO SAIGON WHERE WE WOULD BE MET BY ONE OF KHANH S OFFICERS WHO WOULD ARRANGE FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE. HE UNDERSTANDS THE NECESSITY TO AVOID PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF ULTIMATE END STRENGTHS AND AGREES TO CONFORM TO OUR REQUEST FOR SECRECY ON THIS SUBJECT.

THERE WAS A SHORT DISCUSSION OF PRESS LEAKS GENERATED BY THE QUICK APPEARANCE IN THE PRESS ON JULY 23 OF OUR JOINT CONFERENCE ARISING FROM GENERAL KY S STATEMENT ON PENETRATIONS OF NORTH VIET NAM. MR. JOHNSON TOLD HIM THAT A SAIGON US PRESSMAN HAD SAID THAT THE LEAK WAS FROM THE VIETNAMESE SIDE. WE AGREED THAT, WHOEVER THE CULPRIT, THE INCIDENT IS A REMINDER THAT THERE ARE UNFRIENDLY ELEMENTS HERE AND ELSEWHERE ANXIOUS TO DRIVE

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-2-232, July 27, 10 a.m., from Saigon (SECTION I OF II).

A WEDGE BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS IN GENERAL AND BETWEEN KHANH AND TAYLOR IN PARTICULAR. WE ALL AGREED TO BE WATCHFUL IN THE FUTURE. KHANH MADE A NOTE TO INVESTIGATE LEAK.

KHANH SAID PRESS STORIES ON ALLEGED US CORRESPONDENCE WITH PEKING THROUGH AYUB HAD BEEN RAISED AT CABINET MEETING. WE REPLIED THAT THIS IS JUST TYPE THING THAT HOSTILE ELEMENTS WILL USE TO CREATE SUSPICION AND DISTRUST BETWEEN US. FACTS WERE EXACTLY OPPOSITE FROM THOSE IN PRESS STORIES. FACTS WERE THAT WE HAD ASKED CERTAIN COUNTRIES HAVING RELATIONS WITH PEKING, PARTICULARLY SEATO COUNTRIES, TO MAKE CLEAR TO PEKING (AND WHERE POSSIBLE TO HANOI) THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO SVN WAS FIRM, THEY SHOULD NOT MAKE MISTAKE OF THINKING WE ABANDON SVN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR PEKING AND HANOI TO MAKE ANY ASSUMPTION TO CONTRARY. AYUB HAD APPARENTLY MADE SAME REPRESENTATIONS TO PEKING AND HAD A REPLY. THIS WAS FAR DIFFERENT FROM US ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH PEKING THRU PAKISTAN. WE HAD NOT AND WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE OVER SVN BEHIND BACK SVN. IT WAS ESSENTIAL KHANH BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR ON THIS. WE WOULD EXPECT THE SAME FROM HIM. HE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING AND SAID WE MUST APPRECIATE VIETNAMESE SENSITIVITIES O THIS AFTER THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH FRENCH. HE MENTIONED THERE WERE EVEN RUMORS THAT BECAUSE OF JOHNSON S PREVIOUS BACKGROUND OF NEGOTIATION WITH CHICOMS, HE HAD SOMEHOW BEEN SENT HERE TO NEGOTIATE. JOHNSON REPLIED THAT HIS PREVIOUS EXPIERIENCE OF NEGOTIATRY WITH CHICOMS WAS JUST REASON THAT HE PERSONNALLY HAD NO DESIRE REPEAT EXPERIENCE.

WE THEN INVITED KHANH TO SPEAK FRANKLY ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON US POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM -- WAS HE AS UNHAPPY ABOUT IT AS REPORTED? HE ANSWERED INDIRECTLY BY EXPLAINING HIS VIEWS ABOUT THE NEED FOR PRESSURE ON THE NORTH. HE AGAIN SPOKE STRONGLY ABOUT NATIONAL WAR-WEARINESS AND THE NEED TO BRING HOSTILITIES TO A PROMPT END. ONCE MORE IT CAME OUT CLEARLY THAT HE IS THINKING ABOUT REPRISAL TIT-FOR-TAT BOMBING RATHER THAN A MOVEMENT NORTH WITH LAND FORCES OR MASSIVE BOMBING TO EFFECT TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF HANOI AND ALL ITS WORKS. HE WANTS TO DO THIS REPRISAL BOMBING TO ENCOURAGE HIS PEOPLE AND TO HASTEN HO CHI MINH

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-3-232, July 27, 10 a.m., from Saigon (SECTION I OF II).

TO CONCLUDE THAT THE SUPPORT OF THE VC SHOULD END. HE RECOGNIZES THAT AT SOME TIME HE WILL NEED THE COOPERATION OF HO CHI MINH TO END THE VIET CONG ACTIVITIES IN THE SOUTH.

CFN 103 13 253 1503 23623 SVN SVN VC

TAYLOR

NOTE: Advance copy to S/S-O at 11:35 a.m., July 27.
Passed White House July 27 at 11:50 a.m.
Passed DOD at 11:50 a.m., July 27.

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